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UNCLAS MANILA 001281

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DEPARTMENT FOR EAP/MTS
PASS TO PEACE CORPS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [CASC](#) [ASEC](#) [RP](#)

SUBJECT: FILIPINOS MOURN LOSS OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEER

REF: A. MANILA 1232

[B](#). STATE 50781

[C](#). MANILA 1190

[1](#)1. Philippine government senior officials, politicians, and media on April 20 widely expressed condolences over the tragic death of Peace Corps Volunteer Julia Campbell (reftels). President Arroyo, members of her Cabinet, as well as numerous Congressmen and Senators issued statements not only voicing their heartfelt sympathy for the Campbell family and friends, but also remembering her service to the Philippines during her time as a Peace Corps volunteer. Campbell, who was expected to complete her service in June 2007, most recently was teaching English language in a school in Legaspi City, southeast of Manila.

[1](#)2. President Arroyo's statement of sympathy noted that "It is unfortunate that a committed and selfless person, who has, based on the work she has done in Sorsogon, obviously grown to love our country, met a tragic end here." Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo, who helped to ensure provision of

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military helicopters and personnel to assist with the search for Campbell, described her volunteer work in the Philippines as a "testament to her great character, generosity, and dedication to serve others."

[1](#)3. The Philippine Government provided extraordinary assistance and support throughout the search and rescue operations and continues to do so as the investigation into Campbell's death continues. Members of the Philippine National Police along with Embassy officials escorted the body to Manila on April 19. Philippine authorities carefully treated the location where the body was discovered as a crime scene and immediately initiated an investigation because of presumed foul play. As of April 20, the police have identified a suspect, whom they believe was the last person to be with Campbell.

[1](#)4. Comment: The outpouring of condolences overshadowed all other news on April 20, even that of the mid-term elections, the fighting in Jolo Island, and the hospitalization of President Arroyo's husband. We expect the widespread media coverage to continue, especially as the investigation into her death proceeds and American pathologists conduct the autopsy. The overwhelming supportive reaction across the board from political leaders and media alike, even amidst other major political events, underscores the strong positive attitudes towards the United States and the American people in the Philippines. End comment.

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